



Any Time, Any Place, Any Path, Any Pace:

Taking the Lead on
e-Learning Policy

Any
Any
Any
Any

Time,
Place,
Path,
Pace:

Taking the Lead on e-Learning Policy

NASBE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION

The Report of the NASBE Study Group on e-Learning: The Future of Education

2001

The NASBE Study Group on e-Learning

Members of the Study Group

- ▶ Jean Gulliver, Study Group Chair, Maine
- ▶ Marilyn McConachie, Study Group Vice Chair, Illinois
- ▶ Anne Dillman, New Jersey
- ▶ Reginald Dunn, Maryland
- ▶ Sue Gamble, Kansas
- ▶ Luisa Iadeluca, NASBE Associate Member, New York
- ▶ Greg Killian, South Carolina
- ▶ Mary Jean Montgomery, Iowa
- ▶ Betty Pickett, Arkansas
- ▶ Jared Polis, Colorado
- ▶ Anthony South, Executive Director, Maryland State Board of Education
- ▶ Ronald Spencer, West Virginia
- ▶ Gully Stanford, Colorado
- ▶ Teresa Theurer, Utah
- ▶ Lewis Thompson, Arkansas
- ▶ Michael David Warren, Jr., Michigan
- ▶ Eileen Weiser, Michigan
- ▶ Paul Whalen, Kentucky
- ▶ Martha Wise, Ohio

Ex Officio Members

- ▶ Thomas G. Carroll, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education
- ▶ Wendy M. Cullar, Florida Learning Alliance: The Rural Connection
- ▶ Hilary LaMonte, National School Boards Association
- ▶ Arthur Sheekey, Council of Chief State School Officers

Study Group Staff

- ▶ Jim Bogden, Project Director
- ▶ Carolyn M. Headen, Director of Development
- ▶ Jeanne Pecori, Managing Editor

Presenters to the Study Group

19–20 January 2001, Alexandria, Virginia

- ▶ Kathleen Fulton, Commission on Web-Based Education
- ▶ Hilary LaMonte, National School Boards Association
- ▶ Kelly Levy, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), U.S. Department of Commerce

9–10 March 2001, Washington, DC

- ▶ Mary Jayne Broncato, Illinois Virtual High School
- ▶ Thomas Carroll, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education
- ▶ Wendy M. Cullar, Florida Learning Alliance
- ▶ Sharon Johnston, Florida Virtual School
- ▶ Linda A. Pittenger, Kentucky Virtual High School

15–16 June 2001, Alexandria, Virginia

- ▶ Paul Bloom, APEX Learning
- ▶ Karen Creech, North Carolina Department of Education
- ▶ Pasquale (Pat) J. DeVito, National Research Council
- ▶ Richard Hershman, National Education Knowledge Industry Association
- ▶ Luisa Iadeluca, NASBE Associate Member
- ▶ Margie Jorgensen, Harcourt Educational Measurement
- ▶ Carla Nuxoll, APEX Learning
- ▶ Ron Phipps, Institute for Higher Education Policy
- ▶ Mark Schaefermeyer, Virginia State Department of Education
- ▶ Holly Spurlock, National Center for Education Statistics
- ▶ Barbara Stein, National Education Association

Additional copies of *Any Time, Any Place, Any Path, Any Pace: Taking the Lead on e-Learning Policy* are available for \$14.00 each plus 10% for shipping and handling (\$4.00 minimum) from NASBE at 277 South Washington Street, Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22314. All orders under \$50.00 must be prepaid. Call 800-220-5183 for more information. Volume discounts available.

Copyright ©2001 National Association of State Boards of Education
All rights reserved. ISBN 1-58434-049-5

Table of Contents

	Executive Summary	4
I.	Wanted: Leaders Now!	6
II.	The Power of e-Learning	10
	Transforming how and what students learn	
	Transforming schools	
	Transforming teachers	
	Transforming the system	
	Seizing policy opportunities	
III.	Reengineering the System	19
	Revising learning standards	
	Bringing state assessments online	
	Streamlining policies	
	Empowering families	
	Moving beyond geographic boundaries	
IV.	Assuring Equity	27
	Ensuring high-quality educators for all children	
	Providing access to robust equipment and the Internet at school	
	Providing after-school access	
	Supplying technologies to assist students with special needs	
V.	Delivering Quality Instruction to All Learners	41
	Offering online courses for credit	
	Providing other quality e-learning resources	
	Protecting children	
	References	48

Executive Summary

In fits and starts, public education is undergoing a makeover of historic dimensions. The slogan adopted by the Florida Virtual School succinctly describes a compelling vision for a transformed education system, one in which “any time, any place, any path, any pace” learning is delivered through modern technologies that are available today. Evidence to date convincingly demonstrates that, when used appropriately, electronically delivered education—“e-learning”—can improve how students learn, can improve what students learn, and can deliver high-quality learning opportunities to **all** children.

Having examined the emerging evidence and considered the doubts and cautions, the NASBE Study Group on e-Learning concludes that ***e-learning will improve American education in valuable ways and should be universally implemented as soon as possible.*** Technology is not a solution in isolation, but rather a key component that helps make it possible for schools to address core educational challenges.

However, the uncomfortable reality is that education leaders are not currently driving the policy agenda. Rapidly moving trends are outpacing the ability of policymakers to keep up. In the absence of firm policy guidance, the nation is rushing pell-mell toward an ad hoc system of education that exacerbates existing disparities and cannot assure a high standard of education across new modes of instruction. By allowing this policy vacuum to continue, education leaders are failing to meet their obligation to assure that all students are provided a quality education.

State education policymakers should seize the opportunity to take the lead and move decisively to assure that e-learning spreads rapidly and equitably, is used well, and strengthens the public education system. The time is ripe for state boards of education and other

state education leaders to think through the various policy questions, consider the implications, and adopt policies that will drive the technology in directions that effectively maximize student achievement—for **all** students.

The primary goal of this report is to provide a sufficient context so that education policy leaders can ask the right policy questions and **take the lead** on developing sound e-learning policies. Following are the major policy opportunities identified by the Study Group:

Reengineering the System

Restructuring the public education system to maximize the benefits of e-learning requires attention to basic policy foundations that influence the day-to-day behaviors of teachers, administrators, and students.

- ▶ **Revising learning standards:** Revisit what should be stressed in state and district academic standards.
- ▶ **Bringing state assessments online:** Develop and implement computer-based assessment systems.
- ▶ **Streamlining policies:** Adopt or revise state and local policies for efficient administration of e-learning and review policies that can result in counterproductive incentives or inhibit e-learning.
- ▶ **Empowering families:** Consider the extent to which the public education system should offer and provide choices to families among different ways of organizing and delivering learning services.

- ▶ **Moving beyond geographic boundaries:** Determine how best to work through policy issues that cross state boundaries.

Assuring Equity

The Study Group firmly believes that the most valuable benefit of e-learning is its potential ability to deliver high-quality instructional services to all learners regardless of location, family or cultural background, or disability. Assuring universal opportunity is a critical policy foundation.

- ▶ **Ensuring high-quality educators for all children:** Redouble efforts to establish policies and programs to ensure that well-prepared and well-supported teachers are equitably deployed across all settings so that every student is served by instructional staff who provide effective guidance and assistance.
- ▶ **Providing access to robust equipment and the Internet at school:** Ensure that every student has access at school to the equipment, software, fast Internet connections, and other resources necessary to take full advantage of e-learning opportunities.
- ▶ **Providing after-school access:** Work with other agencies to ensure that every student has convenient and affordable access to e-learning opportunities when school is out.
- ▶ **Supplying technologies to assist students with special needs:** Establish

policies and acquire funding to ensure that all students with special needs (disability, language, setting) effectively gain the benefits of online courses and other instructional resources in ways equivalent to other students.

Delivering Quality Instruction to Learners

Making available appropriate e-learning resources for a quality education raises complex policy questions that can challenge basic assumptions governing the traditional education system and settled ways of doing business. This is an exciting time of innovation and experiment that provokes hopes—and fears—of fundamental change.

- ▶ **Offering online courses for credit:** Establish policies and procedures to encourage the universal availability of virtual schools and other opportunities for students to earn credit for taking a wide variety of classes online. A detailed checklist of issues that state education policymakers may wish to consider is included in the boxes on pages 43 and 44.
- ▶ **Providing other quality e-learning resources:** Determine effective ways to rapidly expand the availability of a wide range of high-quality e-learning resources.
- ▶ **Protecting children:** Develop and/or revisit policies addressing appropriate student use of the Internet, privacy protection, and advertising in public schools.

NASBE wishes to thank the following sponsors for generously contributing financial support to the Study Group on e-Learning: The Future of Education



TWO DECADES OF ADVANCES IN
EDUCATION AND MEDICAL RESEARCH



NetSchools
Transforming Education

The National Association of State Boards of Education

277 South Washington Street ■ Suite 100 ■ Alexandria, VA 22314 ■ 703.684.4000 ■ www.nasbe.org

The National Association of State Boards of Education is a nonprofit, private association that represents state and territorial boards of education. Our principal objectives are to strengthen state leadership in education policymaking; promote excellence in the education of all students; advocate equality of access to educational opportunity; and assure responsible lay governance of public education.